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Agenda item 29

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/98)

Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner (Austria): I am truly honoured to have the opportunity today to address the General Assembly in my capacity as current Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, which gives an impressive account of the broad scope of the cooperation between the two organizations.

The United Nations is one of the closest partners of the OSCE in our common efforts for "freedom from fear", to take that very vivid notion from the Millennium report of the Secretary-General. This special partnership is also reflected in the status of the OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

One of our objectives during our chairmanship is to further strengthen cooperation with our partner organizations, in particular the United Nations. It goes without saying that no institution or country on its own is able to combat effectively the threats to security and

stability in our region, which have become more diverse and complex since the end of the cold war. The OSCE has always seen itself as an integral part of a web of interlocking institutions which deal with security, human rights and economic issues in the OSCE area.

The call for enhanced cooperation and coordination for a pragmatic division of labour which draws on the respective strengths of the various actors might belong to the standard repertoire of multilateral diplomacy. But this does not change its relevance: we must avoid needless competition between institutions and ensure the efficient use of resources. We, the Member States, bear particular responsibility in this respect.

The OSCE has responded to this challenge by developing the Platform for Cooperative Security as a framework for cooperation between the OSCE and its international partners. This was adopted at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999 as part of the Charter on European Security. The goal of the Platform is to strengthen the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between those organizations and institutions concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security in the OSCE area.

I would like to share the conclusion of the Secretary-General, as expressed in his report (A/55/98), that the cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations has continued to prosper over recent years. This is particularly true at the level of work in the field, which is playing an ever greater role

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in the work of the OSCE. In Kosovo, where the OSCE acts as one of the distinct pillars of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, I can even see a new quality in the relations between our two organizations. Given the multitude and diversity of tasks and the very difficult environment, this cooperation has so far fared quite well.

This year is a very special one for our organization. We celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. This document not only constituted a breakthrough in East-West relations during the cold war but also initiated the Helsinki process, which still holds very valid lessons for our common efforts for peace and stability. Helsinki aimed at achieving security and stability through cooperation, and took a broad and comprehensive view of security. I see the most lasting legacy, however, in the recognition of the close link between better relations among States and respect for human rights within them.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) underwent a fundamental change and evolved into the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The key role of democracy and human rights and strong and self-confident civil societies in the efforts of the organization for peace and stability in Europe has, however, remained unchanged. This was confirmed in the Charter on European Security. Participating States are not only responsible to each other for the implementation of OSCE commitments but also accountable to their citizens.

The CSCE, and now the OSCE, has proved to be a very flexible instrument and adjusted itself to far-reaching changes in the security landscape of Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. By evolving into a field organization with a network of 20 missions and other field operations, the OSCE has adapted itself to an environment in which security and stability are more and more threatened by developments within States than by aggressive postures between States. Poverty, ethnic conflict, serious violations of human and minority rights, resource depletion and environmental degradation are often the long-term causes of violent conflict which transcend the scope of the mainly military instruments of classical security policy.

Ultimately, the success of the OSCE will be measured by its contribution to the improvement of the

lives of the people in our countries and its response to their needs and hopes and, thus, by its ability to effectively address the various conflicts and crises throughout the OSCE area. Let me therefore turn to the specific challenges for the OSCE in the prevention, settlement and management of conflicts.

There is a continuing focus on South-Eastern Europe. History has very clearly shown that there is no security in Europe as long as there is instability in this part of our continent. The truly historic developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have brought us somewhat closer to a common Europe, wholly at peace and fully free. The Serbian people made it clear that they want to live in a democratic country which is finally at peace with its neighbours.

We all hope that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, under the new democratic leadership, will soon become an integral part of the international community. As Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, I will support the integration of the country into international bodies. I would very much welcome a formal request by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for membership in the OSCE as soon as possible.

The democratic change should help the work of the OSCE in this region, which is mainly devoted to peace-building, and particularly to the fostering of democracy, the rule of law and civil societies. Free and fair elections play a key role in this context. The OSCE is tasked, among others, with the organization of the local elections in Kosovo this Saturday and, two weeks later, of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Kosovo the OSCE has been engaged, together with the United Nations, in the very difficult task of civil and voter registration, which resulted in more than one million registrations and, on the whole, proceeded quite well. I regret very much, however, that the Kosovo Serbs did not participate in this exercise and that the former regime in Belgrade did not allow registration in Serbia. We will certainly not cease our efforts to bring about active participation of the Kosovo Serbs in political life, since otherwise our common goal of maintaining the multi-ethnic character of Kosovo would no longer seem realistic. This will also depend on a significant improvement of the internal security situation. The police school run by the OSCE is contributing to this aim through the

establishment of a professionally trained, multi-ethnic police force.

This year has seen encouraging developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina too, where the OSCE also cooperates closely with the United Nations. The communal elections organized by the OSCE contributed to greater pluralism and less ethnocentrism in the political landscape. I very much hope that the forthcoming general elections will further foster these developments. The growing number of minority returns, which hopefully will be sustained and further speeded up, reflects these positive trends.

One of the main principles of our chairmanship is to give equal attention and treatment to conflicts and potential risks to security, irrespective of their geographical location, and not to lose sight of our pronounced aim to create a common security space. The conflict in the northern Caucasus reminds us that we still have a long way to go in realizing a new era of democracy, peace and unity for all people in the OSCE area. These goals were solemnly proclaimed by heads of State and Government 10 years ago in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. I am convinced that the OSCE can make a very positive contribution to the alleviation of the suffering of the civilian population, as well as to the search for the political dialogue which I see as indispensable for ensuring lasting peace and stability in this region. But this requires the return of the OSCE to the region. We have obtained the principled assurance from the Russian side for such a return. We expect that the specific talks on the technical and organizational details, and in particular on the questions of security, will very soon be concluded successfully.

Of particular concern to our chairmanship are the so-called "frozen conflicts" in the southern Caucasus and in Moldova, conflicts that are often overshadowed by other crises in the OSCE region. Indeed, we can register some progress in the settlement of the conflict concerning the Tshinvali region in South Ossetia, Georgia. The constructive discussion on status-related issues at a meeting with experts from the region in Baden, Austria, last July gave new impetus to the peace negotiations. We are now trying to ensure that this so-called "Baden process" will keep its dynamism.

With regard to Abkhazia, Georgia, our aim remains to help create conditions for the safe and smooth return of refugees to the Gali region, again in close cooperation with the United Nations, which has

the leading role in the settlement of this conflict. I believe that a joint evaluation on the ground and on the opening of a United Nations human rights office with OSCE participation in Gali — hopefully under improved security conditions — would be very helpful in this respect.

We hope that the negotiations, which we hope will take place at the end of this month, will lead to progress towards a final settlement of the future status of the Trans-Dniestrian region which respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. We expect the first steps, with regard to the withdrawal of Russian military equipment, to start very soon, so as to ensure the fulfilment of the respective Istanbul commitment by the Russian Federation.

As to Georgia, let me mention one very successful activity of the OSCE. We often speak — and rightly so — of the promotion of a culture of conflict prevention. A good example for such a preventive approach is, in my view, the observation mission of the OSCE at the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation.

Also in Central Asia, the work of the OSCE is focusing on conflict prevention. During my several visits to the region, the most recent being only last week, and in my talks to the Presidents of the five States, I got a first-hand account of the security problems. Terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime and illegal arms and drug trafficking, resource depletion, especially freshwater scarcities, and environmental problems, but also the precarious situation in Afghanistan, endanger the situation and stability in the whole region.

In view of our target to achieve comprehensive security throughout the OSCE area, we have continued our efforts to increase OSCE cooperation with the Central Asian participating States. The primary role of the OSCE is that of a political platform supporting the efforts of other specialized international actors, including those from the United Nations family. So, for instance, just last week in Tashkent, together with the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, we held an international conference on the issues of drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. I hope that this event was able to raise international awareness of these threats to security and stability, to contribute to the strengthening of regional cooperation among the Central Asian participating

States and to enhance cooperation and coordination among the international actors active in the region.

I have already underlined the key importance of the human dimension in the work of the OSCE. Conflicts in the last decade were mainly internal and took a heavy toll on the civilian population, women and children in particular. We have, therefore, put a specific focus on problems related to human security, such as children in armed conflict, the unchecked proliferation of small arms, and trafficking in human beings, in particular of women and girls. Paying greater attention to these abhorrent facts of civil unrest in the work of the OSCE is the logical consequence of an approach that sees the ultimate aim of all the efforts in the improvement of the security of the individual, an understanding of security which was confirmed in the Istanbul Summit Declaration.

Economic and environmental issues are of considerable relevance in pursuing an effective and broad approach to security policy. We have, therefore, aimed at ensuring a stronger, action-oriented role of the OSCE in this dimension also. The eighth OSCE Economic Forum in Prague in mid-April was indeed devoted to the task of post-conflict rehabilitation. In preparing and organizing the Forum we tried a new and, I think, successful approach, in placing greater emphasis on the OSCE's practical work in the field. We have also pursued the goal of enhanced cooperation between the OSCE and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). To this end the Executive Secretary of the ECE was invited for the first time to address the Permanent Council of the OSCE.

Let me also report on one more measure which should enable the OSCE to respond faster and more efficiently to civilian crises. The Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams — the so-called REACT programme — should allow highly trained civilian experts in the areas of policing, democratization and elections to be deployed to the field more quickly. This would be achieved through greater coherence in the training programmes and recruitment procedures of the participating States. I am very glad that the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Fréchette, has accepted our invitation to attend the forthcoming OSCE Ministerial Council and to speak about the experiences of the United Nations in this field, also in view of the recent Brahimi report.

The Ministerial Council of the OSCE, which will take place at the end of November in Vienna, should provide us with the opportunity both to take stock of the contribution of the Organization to peace and stability in the OSCE area, following the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, and to set guideposts for its future work. We will have to evaluate the progress made since the Istanbul Summit and the contribution of the OSCE to peace-building and conflict prevention. In addition, new threats to security and the responses required of a security organization like the OSCE should be assessed. We would like to see this Ministerial Council give the political impetus to an enhanced focus — also within the framework of the OSCE — to the above-mentioned human security issues.

The OSCE and the United Nations are natural partners in their common efforts for peace, democracy and prosperity. We will continue to further strengthen this close partnership. An effective contribution of the OSCE to security and stability in this region is also in the very interest of the United Nations. This should free up United Nations resources for conflict prevention and crisis management in parts of the world with less developed security arrangements.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Belarus delegation welcomes Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to the General Assembly as we take up the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

The Republic of Belarus attaches special importance to the relationship between the United Nations and the major regional organizations. We are guided by the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations as we approach today's discussion. In our view, the OSCE remains a unique, pan-European forum that reflects the interests and aspirations of all States on the continent.

The activities of the OSCE last year were determined to a large extent by decisions taken at the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in November 1999 and by the major documents adopted there. For all practical purposes, these documents define the principles of the indivisibility of European security and its integration into a global security system. In our view, an analysis of the provisions of the Charter on European Security that was adopted last year in Istanbul and of the

Millennium Declaration further confirms that there is a single framework for relations between the OSCE and the United Nations.

One important activity of the two organizations continues to be the elaboration and implementation of an early warning mechanism to avert and settle conflicts. The OSCE activities in Kosovo that are being carried out within the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) remain a real test for the OSCE and its member States. We believe that, at the present stage — taking account of the democratic changes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — it is once again necessary to seriously assess the consequences of any actions relating to the holding of municipal elections in Kosovo. In our view, we must not rush or take hasty decisions that, given the present security situation in Kosovo, could permanently undermine belief in the ability of the OSCE and of the international community as a whole to act in keeping with generally accepted democratic principles and values. A decision on the holding of elections must be taken on the basis of intensive consultations with Belgrade and take into account the views of all the parties that have an interest in the future status of Kosovo.

This year Belarus and the OSCE worked together particularly on the preparation for and holding of parliamentary elections for the representatives to our country's National Assembly. Throughout virtually all of last year the central electoral commission of the Republic of Belarus, the National Assembly and all the social and political forces in our country were actively involved in discussions with the OSCE consultative observer mission in Minsk. The result of this work was the preparation of a document unprecedented in the 10 years of Belarusian democracy and statehood: the electoral code of the Republic of Belarus. This code took account of virtually all of the key demands of experts from the main international and regional organizations, including the OSCE. In particular, provisions were introduced governing early access of candidates to the media, the status of international electoral observers, limiting the duration of advance voting, abolishing the prosecution of persons who call for the boycott of elections and a number of other important changes. The Council of Europe's Venice Commission for Democracy through Law gave a positive assessment of the document that was adopted.

Just before the elections it was agreed to have the elections evaluated and observed by the OSCE's

technical assessment mission, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and representatives from the European Parliament troika. Unfortunately, despite the constructive attitude leading up to the elections, these experts and representatives issued a number of negative assessments regarding the elections themselves. These conclusions were based above all on the views of the ODIHR and did not take into account the conclusions of the many independent international observers, from 28 countries, who had also participated in observing the elections. These conclusions were issued against the backdrop of a United States Department of State announcement — issued well before the holding of the elections — that it was not going to recognize the results.

In our opinion, this was virtually tantamount to ignoring the democratic will of millions of Belarusians as clearly expressed during the fair and free elections. However, in accordance with our electoral code, on 29 October the second round of elections will take place. We have had a positive experience working extensively with the OSCE consultative observer mission in Minsk, and we express the hope that, in the final analysis, at the end of the elections the OSCE will issue an objective assessment of the electoral process in Belarus. Attempts to not recognize the outcome of elections in Belarus and to revive the former Supreme Soviet — which by its own decision ceased functioning on 27 November 1996 — would be simply incomprehensible.

A legitimate and truly active parliament — a national assembly — is needed not only by the people of Belarus, but also by the entire international community, since only a real parliament — and not a shadow of the past — can ratify international agreements and treaties, including those of great importance to the United Nations in the fields of security, disarmament and human rights.

Democracy is still the single main choice for the people of Belarus. Belarus hopes for a very constructive approach in the United Nations and the OSCE to the Belarusian people's implementing their age-old right to exercise democratic choice. It is only in that way that the important principles linking the United Nations and the OSCE, found in the United Nations Charter and the most important documents of the OSCE, can be truly effective.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): My country welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" and is particularly pleased to note that the scope of interrelated activities of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) seems to be ever-broadening. We also welcome that same spirit contained in the statement by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Her Excellency Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

Croatia regards cooperation between the United Nations and regional security organizations as an essential part of the ongoing process to stimulate and consolidate peacekeeping and peace-building initiatives. This could be achieved through assistance in conflict management and the building of post-conflict societies, as well as initiatives toward building democratic processes and sustainable development. In this context, Croatia welcomes the efforts by the OSCE to promote conflict prevention, strengthening of democratic institutions and monitoring of the respect for human and minority rights, in line with the conclusions contained in the Lisbon Summit Declaration and confirmed at the Istanbul Summit.

As an active member of the OSCE, Croatia has contributed and shall continue to contribute to these efforts. My country has closely cooperated with and supported OSCE activities in a variety of fields in Croatia. Croatia appreciates all the work that has been done by the OSCE Mission to Croatia and would like to use this opportunity to thank once again the international police monitors who are performing their duties in the Danubian region alongside Croatian national police officers. They will terminate their activities as a separate body within the OSCE Mission on 31 October 2000, thus proving that the process of reconciliation and the establishment of trust between the two communities in that war-torn part of Croatia is progressing well. We also consider this as another step toward the final conclusion of the OSCE mandate in Croatia.

Croatia supports the ongoing efforts of the OSCE to promote democratic values and to lay down the foundations for self-sustainable societies in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. My delegation welcomes the efforts of the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in coordination with the United Nations, aimed at helping to facilitate police and judicial reform, as well as to monitor compliance

with media standards, as mandated by the Dayton Accords. In helping to organize elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is very important to keep the balance between the individual rights of citizens on the one hand and the collective rights of the three constituent nations on the other, and in this regard to respect the constitution. We believe that the new political environment in the region will also have a positive influence on the efforts of the OSCE in that country.

We welcome the restructuring of the OSCE Secretariat in order to attain better value from the services that it provides to its participating States and to enhance its response capabilities to emerging crises. In this context, Croatia supports the strengthening of OSCE operational capabilities through the creation of Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams to enable faster deployment of experts for traditional OSCE tasks, such as conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, and also by creating a new operations centre to further improve the effectiveness of the OSCE and facilitate new programmes.

Croatia assigns great importance to the prevention of the recurrence of armed conflicts. This phenomenon remains closely linked both to unresolved issues regarding the cause of conflict, as well as to inadequate or missing programmes for post-conflict peace-building. The commitment of the international community, and here I speak primarily of regional organizations such as the OSCE, must be coordinated and sustained over time, thereby addressing the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, which, if left unattended, can ignite or re-ignite a conflict. The Croatian case may be a good example. The peacekeeping job done by the United Nations, which led to cessation of hostilities and a peace agreement, was taken over by the OSCE. Moreover, another process, the Stability Pact, has been established with the aim of creating long-lasting stability in the region. My country, as an active participant in this process, will continue to support the activities of the Stability Pact.

I would like to use this opportunity to welcome the recent invitations to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, extended by Her Excellency Benita Ferrero-Waldner, acting as the OSCE Chairperson, as well as by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Kofi Annan, to apply for membership to the OSCE and the United Nations respectively.

Membership of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in these organizations will benefit the prospects for stability in the region, especially if the OSCE re-establishes its Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Any Yugoslav application should proceed from the internationally accepted position that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is one of five equal successor States to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and should consequently be drafted in a manner consistent with the invitations extended to it.

Before closing, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to Austria, which is currently chairing the OSCE, for all the efforts made and for all the diplomatic skills shown while working to secure the efficient and fruitful functioning of the OSCE. Its performance can be compared to the performance of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra that we admired yesterday.

Mr. Brattskar (Norway): One important aspect of the evolving relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the pattern of cooperation and coordination in the field. Field cooperation has now been established in many of the areas of conflict and instability in the OSCE region, including the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Generally speaking, cooperation in the field functions well.

Recently we have seen greatly increased practical cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in Kosovo. Within the framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE has responsibility for institution building and democratization, fields that are within the core activities of the OSCE. Such a division of labour, based on the comparative advantages of each organization, ensures that the limited resources are used in the most cost-effective way. The development of a police force in Kosovo, in which the United Nations is running the operational part and the OSCE the educational part, as well as the United Nations-OSCE cooperation on the upcoming OSCE-led municipal elections in Kosovo, are concrete examples of this.

Similar cooperative arrangements based on division of responsibility have been established both in Bosnia and Croatia and in several parts of the former Soviet Union, particularly the Transcaucasus, where

the United Nations and the OSCE alternately play the leading and supporting roles. This is particularly evident in Georgia, where the division of labour is geographical. In the Abkhazia region of Georgia the United Nations is playing the leading role in the efforts to resolve the conflict, with the OSCE in a supporting role. In South Ossetia the OSCE has taken the lead in efforts to resolve the conflict, while the United Nations Development Programme implements programmes that benefit both communities and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees facilitates the return of refugees and displaced persons. The activities of these two agencies contribute directly to building confidence and promoting development as building blocks in a permanent solution to the conflicts.

In Central Asia, too, there is considerable potential for developing the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE. In recent years, the OSCE has strengthened its presence in the region considerably, and today there are OSCE offices in all five Republics. A number of United Nations agencies also have well-established programmes in these countries. We should therefore look for ways of enhancing cooperation, identifying areas where synergy can be achieved and maximizing the total impact of the efforts of the international community.

As the effectiveness of the OSCE increases, the United Nations will be able to leave more of the responsibility for European crisis management to the OSCE as its regional partner. This of course does not mean that the United Nations will, or should, renounce its overall responsibility to represent, speak for and act on behalf of the international community. The United Nations will still be the Organization that authorizes and legitimizes action by the OSCE. There will still be situations that can be dealt with only by resorting to the United Nations and the Security Council. But within the framework of the close cooperation and contact I have just outlined, the OSCE will increasingly be in a position to make important contributions to security and stability. It will be able to act on behalf of, or in support of, the United Nations, but also on its own, thus enabling the United Nations to concentrate more of its attention and limited resources on conflict management in other parts of the world where regional frameworks are not as well developed as in Europe.

Today, the OSCE has taken on a pronounced operational character. It has permanent field presences

in the 20 countries and conflict areas, in the Balkans, the Caucasus and other parts of the former Soviet Union, including Central Asia. Their tasks fall under the general headings of conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In fact, the OSCE is now present in some capacity in every actual or potential trouble spot on the European continent. That makes it unique among European security institutions, and adds a special legitimacy to its efforts.

Let me also touch briefly on the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As a result of the momentous developments in Serbia following the elections on 24 September, the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the United Nations and the OSCE is no longer a remote vision. We believe that it is important that there be close contact between the United Nations and the OSCE on this issue. The Austrian Chairperson-in-Office has invited President Kostunica to be represented at the upcoming OSCE Ministerial meeting in late November and, as we have heard today, made it clear that she is ready to receive a formal application for OSCE participation from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In conclusion, we believe that the OSCE will continue to be an essential partner of the United Nations in the years to come: a partner that is prepared to work hand in hand with the United Nations in laying the foundation for economic and social development and easing the burden of the world Organization in conflict prevention and conflict management in the OSCE area.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe — the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia — as well as Malta, also an associated country, align themselves with this statement.

One year after the Summit in Istanbul, the ministerial meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which will be held on 27 and 28 November in Vienna, will provide an opportunity to draw up a balance sheet of the implementation of the principles enshrined in the Charter on European Security, as well as of the implementation of the commitments undertaken for the

operational strengthening of the OSCE and for the settlement of existing conflicts.

In this connection, regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, the European Union wishes to draw attention to the Platform for Cooperative Security, which is annexed to the Charter on European Security. This Platform is aimed at promoting the mutual strengthening of the organizations and institutions charged with promoting overall security in the OSCE's area of competence. It also provides for the modalities of practical and effective cooperation. The OSCE works for conflict prevention, early warning, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

As the conflicts in the Balkans during the last decade demonstrated, the strengthening of security and stability requires the adoption of measures in all three dimensions of the OSCE's activities corresponding to the three Helsinki baskets in the time of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE): democracy and human rights, economic development and security issues.

The European Union, which contributes 67 per cent of the OSCE budget, believes that that organization, the only one that covers all the aspects of overall security covering the entire European continent, is, of course, called upon to play an essential role.

The European Union hopes that the ministerial meeting will make it possible to take note of the progress towards strengthening the operational capacities of the organization, made necessary by an increase in the organization's field missions and by the diversified tasks entrusted to it.

The European Union has contributed actively to the negotiations that are under way in connection with the OSCE document on small arms and light weapons. The European Union believes that the adoption of such a document at the next ministerial meeting of the OSCE, will also contribute substantially to the preparation of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In order to be able, effectively and rapidly, to deploy experts to a region in crisis in implementation of a mandate given to it directly or delegated to it by another organization, particularly the United Nations, the OSCE has, within the framework of the Rapid

Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams (REACT) mechanism, has endeavoured to make the procedure for recruitment and assignment of personnel to its field missions more rational and more transparent. The European Union is participating actively in the work under way and will seek to ensure that it conforms with the work that it has itself done to establish non-military means to respond to crises.

The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Louise Fréchette, and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, Mr. Javier Solana, were invited to participate in the OSCE ministerial meeting in order to discuss the possibility of cooperation in the field of crisis management.

The operation centre created within the OSCE secretariat should facilitate the preparation and deployment of new missions. The member countries of the Union have made available experts for high-level posts in that centre. The European Union hopes that close ties of cooperation will be established with the body that has a similar field of competence within the United Nations Secretariat. The European Union is participating actively in the consideration now under way of how to provide the OSCE with legal capacity, which, without calling into question the Organization's flexibility, is vital to the improvement of its daily operations and its relationships with the personnel it employs, as well as with the authorities of the countries that receive missions.

The Union is delighted at the new prospects for the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the OSCE following the democratic changes that have taken place in Belgrade and the generally positive attitude towards the OSCE expressed by the new Yugoslav President. The Union hopes it will be possible for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to be welcomed into the OSCE as soon as possible, following the steps and the procedures now under way.

With regard to Kosovo, the European Union, which provides important support for the work of the OSCE mission, is delighted at the intensive and fruitful cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in Kosovo. It wishes to pay tribute to the work accomplished by the OSCE in connection with the municipal elections of 28 October, including the physical preparation of the elections, rapid and proper registration of the population and the political parties,

the establishment of guidelines and electoral lists, as well as campaign support, media monitoring and advice to political parties. The European Union recalls that a large number of actions of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo are the result of close cooperation between pillars two and three, which relate respectively to the United Nations and the OSCE in the field.

The Union welcomes the success in Croatia of the work of the police-monitoring group in Eastern Slavonia and the region of the Danube, which has led to the recent decision to reduce and restructure that specific area of activity, which the OSCE mission in Croatia had taken over from the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. This illustrates how the work of the United Nations and the OSCE can follow each other and be coordinated in a context of post-conflict normalization. The important progress made by Croatia with respect to its commitments have contributed to this success, and we have all just heard the message addressed to us by the Ambassador of Croatia in this regard.

The European Union continues to appreciate the excellent cooperation of the OSCE and the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It firmly appeals for the adoption by the Parliament and the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the permanent electoral law, as soon as possible following the elections of 11 November, which should be the last one held under the OSCE provisional rules. The Union believes that as the progressive transfer of electoral competence to the Bosnian authorities is accomplished, the Mission should further concentrate on tasks related to democratization, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, transferring the electoral segment to the responsibility of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, as is the rule.

The Union recalls the support it also gives to the OSCE presence in Albania through the Group of Friends, over which it co-presides, and to the OSCE mission in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. With regard to Albania, the European Union also welcomes the support provided by the OSCE in the field of electoral procedures. During the last elections in Albania, that OSCE contribution proved extremely useful. We expect that efforts in that direction will continue with a view to improving electoral procedures and structures.

The Union hopes that the conditions required for the immediate return to Chechnya of the OSCE Assistance Group will now be met, so that it can act to implement the mandate defined in 1995, whose validity was reaffirmed at the Istanbul Summit. Discussions on the technical and organizational details, and in particular on questions of security, should be completed as soon as possible. The Union gives its support to the efforts made by the OSCE Minsk Group and its co-chairpersons in order to facilitate the search for a negotiated solution to the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh. It calls on all the parties involved to display a spirit of compromise, and considers the will expressed by the heads of State of Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue the direct dialogue they have begun an encouraging sign, and it hopes that a formula acceptable to all will promptly be found. The European Union, in cooperation with the institutions of the United Nations system and other international organizations, is determined to make its contribution to support a settlement agreement.

The Union believes that Russia must respect the commitment it undertook at the Istanbul Summit to complete by the end of 2002 the elimination of arms and munitions stockpiles still stationed in the Moldovan region of Transdnestr. It noted the proposals made by Mr. Primakov at the time, who expressed on behalf of the Russian Federation, a will to be further involved in the search for a settlement. The Union will support the efforts of the OSCE acting president to arrive at a political settlement on the future status of that region.

The European Union is delighted at the progress noted during the meeting of experts devoted to South Ossetia in Georgia, held under the auspices of the OSCE last July near Vienna. It hopes that the possible basis for settlement identified at that time will be endorsed at the political level. The Union is prepared to provide financial assistance for the implementation of an agreement and has already designed a plan of assistance for the elimination of small arms.

The deteriorated human rights situation in Abkhazia in Georgia continues to be a concern. The cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations ensures the proper functioning of the joint human rights office opened in Sukhumi. The Union hopes that the two organizations will join their efforts in order to gather information on alleged violations of human

rights in the district of Gali and to examine the possibility of opening an office in Gali.

Finally, the Union believes there is a need to respond to the concerns expressed by the authorities of the Central Asia States, given the mounting threats posed by drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. In this context, the Union is pleased at the joint initiative of the acting presidency of the OSCE and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to hold an international conference on this subject on 19 and 20 October in Tashkent. However, it is appropriate to choose a careful approach to these three phenomena, which while somewhat interrelated are nevertheless different in nature and therefore deserve different treatment. For its part, the European Union has taken the initiative to develop a plan to combat drug trafficking. In general terms the European Union welcomes the OSCE efforts to improve cooperation among the international organizations that are present in Central Asia.

I apologize for having spoken at such length and in such detail. The States of the European Union wanted to emphasize at this debate the close cooperation that has developed between the United Nations, the OSCE — the sole organization to cover the entire European continent — and the European Union with its 15 member States. This tripartite cooperation is an excellent example of what the United Nations can accomplish with the full cooperation of regional organizations.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Only six weeks ago, during the Millennium Summits of the General Assembly and the Security Council, two important documents were adopted at the United Nations, namely, the Millennium Declaration and resolution 1318 (2000) — both of which contain provisions calling for the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The issue of further developing cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) thereby assumes additional importance as one of the priority tasks of the coming century.

Over the past 25 years of its activities, the OSCE has accumulated considerable experience in maintaining security and stability in Europe. At present, this unique trans-Atlantic, pan-European and

Euro-Asian organization has been transformed into a major partner of the United Nations. It is rightfully considered a key political factor in efforts to achieve collective security across the area of its responsibility, in particular, in the fields of conflict prevention, crisis management, arms control and disarmament, and post-conflict rehabilitation.

As a member of both the United Nations and the OSCE, Ukraine notes with satisfaction the growing, mutually reinforcing interaction between the two organizations. In our view, the OSCE Istanbul Summit, which was held in November 1999, provided a qualitatively new foundation for this cooperation. In fact, the documents adopted at Istanbul substantially enhanced the OSCE's conceptual basis and operational capabilities by defining a number of agreed steps to be taken by its participating States with a view to ensuring freedom, prosperity and security. Of particular importance was the adoption of the Charter for European Security and, within its framework, the Platform for Cooperative Security, which should serve as a good basis for closer partnership between the OSCE and other international organizations, in particular, the United Nations.

The Secretary-General's report submitted in document A/55/98 provides many good examples of such cooperation. Ukraine welcomes the many meetings that have taken place between officials of the United Nations and the OSCE, as well as the ninth high-level meeting of the United Nations-OSCE-Council of Europe tripartite process of informal consultations, which for the first time was attended by a representative of the European Commission. We support the practice of expanding the format of consultative machinery between the United Nations and the OSCE and other international bodies.

It is also our belief that cooperation between the two organizations can be strengthened through joint endeavours to develop a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention on the basis of widespread use of preventive diplomacy and peace-building on a European and global scale. The implementation of this idea would be largely in consonance with the proposal put forward by President Kuchma of Ukraine at the Millennium Summit and at the Security Council Summit to develop a comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention. Ukraine is of the view that a practical step towards developing such a strategy on conflict prevention would be to create regional

centres on conflict prevention. In this context, let me recall Ukraine's recent proposal to establish a regional centre for ethnic studies at Kyiv under the auspices of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. We think the activities of such institutions devoted to the monitoring of the current state and development of inter-ethnic relations in the OSCE region would also contribute to the implementation of the United Nations preventive strategy in cooperation with the OSCE.

My country is fully aware of the established division of labour between the United Nations and the OSCE with regard to the settlement of conflict in the OSCE area. We recognize that this division of leading roles in peacemaking efforts is based on the comparative advantages of the two organizations in view of their existing constraints. At the same time, we share the view that all further steps aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two organizations and their missions in zones of conflict should seek to make better use of the resources of the international community in the interests of the countries being assisted.

My country is seriously concerned about the current state of peace settlement for many of the conflicts in the OSCE region. First of all, I would like to refer to the situation in Kosovo. While recognizing the undeniable achievements of the OSCE as one of the pillars of institution-building of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), we are convinced that much more has to be done to make the peace process in the province irreversible and to bring long-awaited stability to the entire Balkans. We hope that the new political environment created by the recent presidential elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will be fully conducive to that end.

We are also convinced that the OSCE — with possible assistance from the United Nations — should take a more active stance to bring about final resolution of so-called frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet territory — in particular in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, and in the Trans-Dniester region of Moldova. Ukraine, as a contributor of personnel to the OSCE missions in Kosovo, Georgia and Nagorny Karabakh, and as one of the guarantor States in the settlement of the conflict in Transdniestria, stands ready to contribute further to the achievement of these goals.

Ukraine is grateful for the ongoing assistance rendered to us jointly by the United Nations Development Programme, OSCE, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities through their inter-agency support for the resettlement and integration of formerly deported people returning to Crimea.

It is well known that Ukraine, with a multi-ethnic population of over 130 ethnic groups, is among the very few newly independent States that have managed to avoid inter-ethnic conflict and to preserve peace and security on its territory. The Ukrainian legislation on national minority rights has received high praise from the Council of Europe, which recognized its full compliance with OSCE norms and principles. Ukraine is the only country in the region in which the OSCE mission to the autonomous Republic of Crimea successfully fulfilled its mandate, in 1999, concluding that the problems of national minorities had been solved by the Government of Ukraine and that the situation in the peninsula was no longer a cause for concern.

Mindful of all this, the President of Ukraine recently decided to submit the candidature of the former Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Tarasyuk, to the post of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. The elections are to take place at the next OSCE ministerial meeting, which is to be held in Vienna at the end of November 2000. We hope that his candidature will enjoy overwhelming support.

Finally, we believe that the draft resolution to be adopted at a later stage during the current session of the General Assembly will contribute to further strengthening the mutually complementary cooperation that exists between the United Nations and the OSCE.

In conclusion, I would like to express our admiration for Austria's performance of its duties as OSCE Chairman-in-Office. We congratulate Minister Ferrero-Waldner on her outstanding personal commitment to that task. We also wish the same success to Romania, which is to take up those responsibilities next year.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation deems it essential to further improve and intensify United Nations cooperation with regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We have consistently advocated the institutionalization of forms of interaction and cooperation as well as the more effective use of the capacities and resources of regional organizations. Of course, this should be done while preserving the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We welcome the further development of the practice of regular meetings between top officials of the United Nations Secretariat and leading regional organizations. We must increase the practical returns from these events. This applies, of course, to cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The OSCE has unique experience in disarmament and arms control, the implementation of confidence-building measures and the promotion of democratization in the Euro-Atlantic area. We believe that it should play a central system-building and coordinating role in European matters, not only in preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and crisis settlement, but also in other areas where the OSCE's key advantages — a comprehensive approach to security problems and the wide span of its geographic coverage — can be used. In addition, the OSCE's functions in the area of legal norm-making must be maintained and strengthened. The OSCE should also define the principles and realities of inter-State and inter-institutional relations. Indeed, it should be a kind of trendsetter in this area.

The full use of the OSCE's unique potential will make it possible to create a system of equal security in the Euro-Atlantic area that is based on maintaining the balance of interests of all countries in the region. The organization must not be allowed to become an instrument for furthering the narrow interests or expanding the sphere of influence of certain States, groups of States or military-political alliances. Such a trend, if not neutralized, will inevitably result in the OSCE's dying out.

We attach great importance to the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OSCE member States, to be held in Vienna from 27 to 28 November. The Russian delegation has introduced a number of important proposals for that meeting, including an OSCE declaration on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary. We believe

that document could address the important issue of cooperation to effectively counter emerging risks and challenges, in particular the revival of fascism and international terrorism.

We believe that in view of its experience and sphere of competence, the OSCE should also play an active role in the implementation of the Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe, including the overall monitoring of that initiative. Progress on the implementation of the Pact should be assessed at the meeting of the OSCE Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs next month.

United Nations-OSCE cooperation is becoming an important factor in strengthening global and regional stability. Such cooperation should be further focused on areas of key significance for the international community. These include helping to prevent and settle conflicts; ensuring the humanitarian aspects of security, including respect for human rights and the rights of national minorities; and building democratic institutions.

We believe also that the OSCE should concentrate on specific objectives, without substituting for the United Nations in those areas where the latter, because of its universality, can effectively coordinate the actions of various organizations and institutions.

In this context, we attach great significance to the interaction between the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and their corresponding partners within the United Nations system, primarily those operating in Geneva.

Russia welcomes and supports the further strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in the Balkans, in the process of conflict settlement in Abkhazia, Georgia, and Nagorny Karabakh, and in post-conflict peace-building in Tajikistan. Cooperation between the two organizations in resolving the problem of victims of forced migration within the territory of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States countries is very promising.

We welcome also the mutually complementary efforts of the Economic Commission for Europe and the OSCE secretariat Coordinator on Economic and Environmental Issues.

Turning to the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, which the Assembly will be considering later, let me emphasize that we deem it essential that the draft be adopted by consensus. To that end, purely regional issues unrelated to the item should not be artificially introduced into the text. The draft should focus on the framework policy for cooperation between the two organizations.

We expect that the adoption of this draft resolution, which Russia has traditionally co-sponsored, will provide important additional impetus for increasing the practical returns from the interaction between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Mr. Dacaru (Romania): I should like to start by expressing Romania's full support for the statement just made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union and associated countries.

Allow me, as the representative of the next Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to add some specific comments. I am deeply honoured to address the Assembly on this important agenda item on the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Our OSCE chairmanship in 2001 is one of our major foreign-policy priorities and will be guided by the following main principles and objectives: increasing the OSCE's contribution to a free, democratic, prosperous and undivided Europe; fostering the OSCE's role as a forum for political dialogue and cooperation in the field of comprehensive security; identifying the means by which the political will of the OSCE States could be commensurate with the possibilities and operational capabilities of the organization; increasing the efficiency of the OSCE's activities, operations, institutions and mechanisms; respecting the OSCE's achievements and working to ensure compliance by all participating States with its principles, standards, norms and values; maintaining the dynamic and flexible character of the OSCE structures, which should be open and able to adapt quickly to the new priorities and challenges; and fostering the OSCE's cooperation with other institutions and organizations.

Our ultimate goal will be to contribute to the improvement of the political, economic and environmental security of the citizens of OSCE member States, based on respect for human rights, in order to achieve prosperity and social justice. We will

do our utmost to ensure that the OSCE makes its contribution in this respect.

Based on these general objectives, Romania has already identified some concrete priorities. Allow me to comment on a few of them.

In the field of conflict prevention and crisis management, one of our priorities will remain, of course, the situation in the Balkans. In our view, the recent political changes in Belgrade have created an important opportunity for long-term stabilization in the area. We will focus strongly on post-conflict rehabilitation and assistance in the setting up of democratic institutions and the strengthening of the rule of law in the region. Preventive diplomacy is also very important in the region, and increasing intraregional cooperation is a must. This should be complemented by the implementation of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

In addition to the Balkans, the Caucasus will be a focal point of our activities during our chairmanship of the OSCE, with special focus on the situation in Chechnya and Nagorny Karabakh. The implementation of the Istanbul Summit decisions concerning the withdrawal of foreign troops from Georgia and the Republic of Moldova are issues to which we also attach high importance.

We shall also focus on developments in Central Asia, with a view to strengthening the OSCE involvement in the region. Given a background of huge disparities — political, social and economic — between the five States and great ethnic diversity in the region, the risk of extreme instability is still high and the situation will require adequate attention from the organization. Other tasks of the organization under the Romanian chairmanship will include participation in preparing for and observing elections in a number of OSCE member States. In this context, we will put special emphasis on strengthening the OSCE's resources and operational capabilities as a field organization, especially through the implementation of the high-level commitments and decisions related to this issue.

With respect to the human dimension, the Romanian chairmanship will contribute to addressing such issues as the prevention of the torture of children in armed conflict, the situation of internally displaced persons and the problem of trafficking in human beings. Last, but not least, we will continue to pay

attention to non-conventional challenges to European security. That is why Romania has proposed that the 2001 OSCE Economic Forum should concentrate on the issue of transparency and good governance in economic matters.

The multifaceted and complex nature of security in the OSCE region in recent years has underlined the fact that no organization acting alone is able to cope with the current challenges. To implement the priorities that I have underlined, therefore, we shall attempt to improve cooperation between the OSCE and other institutions and organizations, especially the United Nations, and render it operational. The recent report of the Secretary-General in document A/55/98, for which we extend our warm congratulations, fully demonstrates that cooperation between the two organizations has, indeed, intensified over the past year. Romania will make every effort to further enhance the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. During the next year, we will continue to maintain close coordination through regular contacts at all levels.

Before concluding, I should like to commend the excellent work done by the Austrian Chairperson-in-Office, Her Excellency Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and assure the Secretary General of the OSCE, Mr. Ján Kubiš, of our full support.

Mr. Kobayashi (Japan): Since the end of the cold war, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been contributing to stability and peace in Europe and central Asia through a broad range of activities in the political, economic, social and humanitarian fields. It has carried out many of its activities in close cooperation with various bodies within the United Nations system. I am pleased to have this opportunity to describe briefly the ways in which Japan, as a partner for cooperation, participates in and contributes to the activities of the OSCE, particularly its operations in South-Eastern Europe.

Since 1996, Japan has sent over 100 election observers to Bosnia and Herzegovina to help supervise the elections there, and has contributed a total of \$4.5 million to that effort. Japan has also provided personnel to, for example, the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and the OSCE mission to Croatia. Furthermore, Japan has participated in the OSCE mission in Kosovo with the contribution of more than

\$1 million of emergency assistance. Most recently, it has dispatched two experts on the Balkans region to contribute to OSCE efforts to ensure that the local elections to be held there are conducted in a free and fair manner. In support of the reconstruction and democratization process, Japan has also decided to assist media activities in Kosovo, contributing \$14.5 million for media equipment through the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). This media-assistance project is currently being implemented in cooperation with the OSCE.

In the belief that cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE can contribute greatly, not only to the stability of the region, but also to international peace and security, Japan considers that it is very important to further strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

I would like to conclude my remarks by reaffirming Japan's ongoing commitment to the activities of the OSCE.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I should like first of all to take this opportunity to welcome Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, in her capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The dramatic changes that the world has gone through during recent decades have created new opportunities for cooperation among nations, while posing new threats. This dichotomy makes cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations more urgent, if we are to both seize the emerging opportunities and meet the challenges facing the world community.

Ten years ago, when the communist system collapsed, many small and medium-sized countries, such as Armenia, could have been left in a political and security vacuum. The OSCE had the vision and the leadership to include those countries in its structure, and thus provided small countries like Armenia with the opportunity to anchor themselves in the community of European nations in accordance with long-established political and social values. While we hope that this integration process will be an ongoing, comprehensive one, we approach our engagement as both a challenge and an opportunity.

History has offered us an opportunity to create a new foundation for our common destiny in the OSCE area. The guiding principles and commitments for this common future were laid down in the Helsinki Final Act. We believe that adherence to the principles of democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and OSCE documents, will create a new space free of dividing lines. In this regard, we consider the Charter on European Security, adopted at the 1999 Summit of the OSCE, as a cornerstone of future European security.

We support the enhancement of the role of the OSCE as a major forum addressing the challenges in the region through preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Strengthening the role of the OSCE will enable it to better assume its responsibilities as a regional organization in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

Today, as some long-suppressed conflicts surface, we notice with satisfaction that the OSCE is willing to rise to the challenge and explore new territory. In its pursuit of solutions and its management of crises, the OSCE, a complex multinational organization, often needs to reconcile principles and norms that, *prima facie*, may not always appear to be compatible.

In his report contained in document A/55/98, the Secretary-General states that the United Nations and the OSCE continued to practise a division of labour based on the comparative advantages of the two organizations and notes, *inter alia*, that the OSCE has retained the lead in the resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. This approach is very much in line with our view that the present format of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship is most appropriate for the resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, especially given the fact that the OSCE is the sole mandated and authoritative body dealing with the issue.

Since 1992 the OSCE has been actively involved through the various permutations of the Minsk process to define the elements for durable peace and stability. Being advocates of a more flexible approach to the settlement, the Government of Armenia, as well as the authorities of Nagorny Karabakh, have accepted the recent proposals of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk

Group as a more realistic effort to address the issue of the status of Nagorny Karabakh, with minimal prejudice to either of the competing claims. Regrettably, Azerbaijan has rejected those proposals. Nevertheless, we hope that the intensified dialogue between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan will enhance the peace process and help to bring about a lasting and comprehensive solution to the problem, through the resumption of negotiations within the OSCE Minsk Group, as stated in the Declaration of the OSCE Summit held in Istanbul, although we think that direct negotiations between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh would be more productive.

The contemporary history of conflict resolution reflects the changing nature of inter- and intra-State relations. It clearly shows the necessity of breaking through the frameworks of conventional perceptions of sovereignty. In this context, we are confident that the Nagorny Karabakh conflict can be resolved only on the basis of the legal equality of the parties to the conflict.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia stated during the general debate,

"For us, peace in Nagorny Karabakh represents, of course, the promise of transforming a situation of hostility and confrontation with our neighbour, Azerbaijan, into one of cooperation and mutually reinforced security. We would like to think of the day when Karabakh is transformed from being a chasm separating our countries into a bridge built for the benefit of all the populations concerned". (A/55/PV.21, p. 12)

Armenia is fully committed to the guiding principles of the OSCE. We always support and actively participate in all bilateral or regional initiatives aimed at developing relations of good-neighbourliness and cooperation in our region. We reiterate our commitment to the arms control process as one of the main security issues in the OSCE region. We believe that further strengthening of stability through conventional arms control will be decisive for future European security.

To conclude, allow me to express our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Austria and his delegation for the excellent work done during their term as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. We look forward to working closely with the delegation of Romania, the incoming Chairman-in-Office.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate. The draft resolution on this item will be submitted at a later date.

Agenda item 22

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/221)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.12)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. Gomaa (Egypt) (spoke in Arabic): It is my pleasure to introduce the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), since my country assumes the chairmanship of the Committee this year.

Over the past 45 years the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee has earned a unique status because of its promotion of legal cooperation between Asian and African States in the field of international law, which is of great importance to our countries. The Committee's initiatives have been welcomed in various United Nations conferences, particularly in conferences dealing with treaty law and the law of the sea. It has also greatly contributed to the establishment of an accepted international legal order based on equality and fairness to all States.

The annual conferences of the Consultative Committee are considered important events in the field of international law. My country, Egypt, had the honour of hosting the session of the Committee in Cairo in February this year, at which a large number of Ministers and high officials from member States, as well as different observer delegations and representatives of international organizations, took part in valuable deliberations and exchanged views concerning contemporary issues in international law, including the topics under examination in the International Law Commission (ILC) and matters pertaining to the implementation of a world trade order.

The Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee expressed the Committee's viewpoints in the United Nations, where the Committee has observer status and to which it

contributes, as well as to the International Law Commission, which the Secretary-General attends regularly. In addition to the annual meetings, several discussions take place during special sessions held by the Committee. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, for instance, organized special meetings in the margins of the annual sessions to discuss the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the law on reservations to treaties, on the treatment of refugees, on the transboundary exercise of jurisdiction by States, as well as proposed meetings concerning the world trade order and review of the special procedures for the settlement of conflicts. These are but recent examples of the work of the Committee.

The reports of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee and declarations adopted by the Committee as a result of those special sessions have become an important source for the development of international law, as well as being a reflection of the views and interests of the Asian and African States. It is worth mentioning in particular that the Committee has also devoted itself to defining the common interests of African and Asian States as regards contemporary issues before the United Nations and other international organizations. In this way the Committee is contributing to the development of a fair, sound and just international legal order.

It is a source of pride to us all that the Committee is one of the international organizations working with a very limited budget; its annual budget is one of the smallest provided to international governmental organizations. The Committee has 45 member States, and there are plans to increase this number by the addition of French-speaking States on both continents, as well as of States from Central Asia and Southern Africa.

I encourage the Committee to increase its activities. It has many progressive plans that would be beneficial to all Member States. In this respect, I would like to mention its training programmes for promoting the teaching of international law and for providing legal expertise in the area of international law. In addition, the Committee provides training on the methodology of teaching international law at various universities in the member States, as well as fellowships for Asian and African students to carry out postgraduate studies in the field of international law. The Committee also supports the publication of books

and periodicals devoted to international law that are of particular importance in Asia and Africa.

It is also worth mentioning that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee was established to provide expertise in international law to the Asian and African States and to provide specific assistance and advice when needed on any aspect of international law of interest to the member States. Advice has been given, for example, on the development of an appropriate legal framework or necessary legislation for the implementation of international treaties or model agreements for developing special joint arrangements. In addition, advice of a legal nature has been provided to one or various individual States.

It is well known that such activities cannot be undertaken, nor can they successfully achieve their purposes, without the necessary resources and financing. The payments of arrears on assessed contributions, as well as voluntary contributions, will undoubtedly help carry out such activities.

Another source of pride is that the work of the Committee, despite financial constraints, is very well organized, thanks to a small group of experts in international law, who are guided by a group of international diplomats headed by an outstanding Secretary-General. Moreover, the Committee has an excellent library, but it is imperative to improve its facilities in due time. Then the Committee will be able to function as a documentation centre on international law in the service of Asian and African States.

We are confident that in the coming years the Committee will devote greater attention to many issues and will be successful in explaining and consolidating the common interests of the Asian and African States — even the interests of the international community. The Committee will also undoubtedly enhance its training activities and the spreading of international legal expertise among the Asian and African States, a step that will enhance the role of these States in the establishment of a world legal order that is fair and equitable for all States. We are certain also that cooperation between the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee and the United Nations will increase progress towards this lofty goal.

We wish the Committee and all its members every success and hope that the United Nations and its Member States will continue to extend vigorous assistance and support to the Committee.

I call upon the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution, contained in document A/55/L.12, which pertains to the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee. The draft resolution pays tribute to the Committee's contributions and hopes that they will continue. So far it has been sponsored by China, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia and Mongolia.

Mr. Gupta (India): We wish the new Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALC) well, and have confidence that under his leadership the Committee will attain new heights in serving the interests not only of the Asian and African States, but also of the wider membership of the United Nations.

It is with great pleasure that we inform the Assembly that India and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee signed the Headquarters Agreement in April this year. Even though the Committee has been situated in New Delhi since its inception and has enjoyed all the privileges and immunities all along, the conclusion of a Headquarters Agreement, coming after the establishment of the Committee's permanent headquarters in New Delhi, is an important landmark in the relationship between the Committee and India as the host country. The Government of India is making every effort to advance the construction of a suitable headquarters building for the office of the Committee and the residence of the Secretary-General, for which a grant of \$1.5 million has been earmarked in its budget.

In this connection, it is appropriate to place on record our sincere and highest appreciation for the work and personality of Mr. Tang Chengyuan, who completed his term of office as Secretary-General of the AALCC in May 2000. His service to the Committee and contribution to the Asian-African legal community during his six-year term was marked by economy, efficiency and political wisdom. We wish him well in all his future endeavours.

The present Secretary-General, Ambassador Wafik Kamil, has an ambitious programme and busy schedule ahead of him. His energy and enthusiasm will see the AALCC successfully through many of the programmes. The agenda set out by the last annual meeting of the Committee, held in Cairo in February

2000, is an impressive one. The new areas are challenging.

The success of the Committee's work over the years is attributable to its basic features. The main objectives and functions of the AALCC are several-fold. The Committee was established essentially to promote international legal cooperation, develop and disseminate expertise in international law by organizing annual meetings, seminars and workshops focusing on current issues of international law under consideration in different forums of the United Nations and other bodies, and to contribute to the process of codification and development of international law. While all endeavours in the field of international law have their political and policy implications, the efforts of the Committee have always been confined to areas of legal interest, while issues of political controversy have been left for other forums within and outside the United Nations.

At the technical level, there are several areas to which the Committee could give priority: the work of the International Law Commission, the contribution being made by the International Court of Justice, evolving international criminal law, legal issues arising from the multitude of international conventions under negotiation, the operation of the international seabed area regime, principles applicable to outer space activities and environmental law.

We are grateful to the AALCC for taking initiatives in organizing special meetings on subjects of contemporary relevance, in cooperation with other international organizations, such as the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization. These meetings have resulted in the publication of some useful materials. In a joint initiative with the United Nations Environment Programme last year, the AALCC brought out a handbook on environmental law that is designed to provide its users with a comprehensive collection of important global and regional environmental law documents. The AALCC publications are useful for budding national and regional capacities to enhance compliance with and implementation of global and regional agreements.

We wish the new Secretary-General all success in his present term of office and assure him of our full cooperation.

Mr. Bossiere (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as Norway, as a country of the European Free Trade Association member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Every two years, the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee provides an opportunity to review cooperation which, from modest beginnings, has intensified and grown to encompass a wide range of subjects. It covers economic, environmental and humanitarian questions, as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes.

We wish to thank the United Nations Secretary-General for his report, which describes the Committee's activities on subjects of interest to both organizations. The report describes the actions taken in this context and testifies to the numerous consultations that have been held between the Committee and various United Nations organs over the two-year period. We therefore wish particularly to emphasize the important role played by the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee in the programmes of the United Nations Decade of International Law and in environment and sustainable development programmes, as well as its commitment to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. These fields of activity were mentioned in General Assembly resolution 53/14 of October 1998.

The Committee's initiatives, however, go beyond these issues. For example, it was one of the six regional organizations chosen by the organizers of the centennial celebrations for the first International Peace Conference. We note with satisfaction the attention paid by the Consultative Committee to the work of the International Law Commission, in particular with regard to the settlement of disputes. The Committee's action thereby supports the work of the United Nations and contributes to the progressive codification of international law by encouraging exchanges of views and of information.

Initiatives taken by the Consultative Committee have proven useful to the work of the Sixth Committee.

The special interest now taken by the Committee in international trade law and in the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law will doubtless help to assert the universal character of the latter's proceedings. Similarly, attention paid by the Committee to the functioning of the legal and arbitration bodies established by the Convention on the Law of the Sea; to the operation of the bodies of the World Trade Organization; and to the proceedings of the World Intellectual Property Organization will certainly help to enrich their work.

That is why we hope that this cooperation will continue in the interest of the entire United Nations system.

Mr. Qu Wensheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank Mr. Goma for his introductory statement on the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC). His introduction allowed us to note with pleasure the growing relationship between the two organizations and their ever-widening spheres of cooperation.

The AALCC, as a legal consultative committee of Asian and African Governments, has been dedicated from the day of its inception to legal consultations and coordination among member States. It considers and studies the latest developments in international law. It undertakes in-depth studies of legal issues of interest to Asian and African States and has achieved positive results. Experience has shown that the AALCC has not only provided a forum for discussion and cooperation on legal and related issues of common concern to Asian and African countries, but also made important contributions to the development and codification of international law.

Since attaining observer status in the General Assembly, the AALCC has increased its cooperation with the United Nations. The United Nations Secretary-General, the International Law Commission (ILC), the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees all send representatives to the AALCC's annual sessions. The AALCC in turn attends various meetings of United Nations bodies and actively participates in the deliberation of issues within its competence.

For many years, the AALCC has treated legal and related issues of concern to the United Nations and its bodies as priority items on its agenda. In this regard, the AALCC's cooperation with the ILC stands out. Each year, the AALCC invites an ILC representative to attend its annual sessions and to give a briefing on the Commission's work. It also places consideration of the ILC report on its agenda, debates it and makes recommendations. In turn, the Secretary-General of AALCC attends the ILC's annual sessions and briefs the Commission on its work. The two bodies enjoy very satisfactory and fruitful cooperation.

In addition to international law, the AALCC's cooperation with the United Nations is expanding into other areas, such as economic, social, environmental and humanitarian matters. For example, after the decade of 1990 to 1999 was declared the United Nations Decade of International Law, the AALCC right away compiled research material, decided on activities to be launched during the Decade and submitted a report to the Secretary-General on a possible role of the AALCC in attaining the goals of the Decade.

In April 1999, during its thirty-eighth session, the AALCC held a special meeting on environmental law and published, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, the Asian-African Handbook on Environmental Law.

As a member of the United Nations and the AALCC, China is pleased to see the increasingly close and broad cooperation between the two organizations. We hope that they will strengthen their cooperation in areas of common concern in the new millennium, especially with regard to the development and codification of international law, which would thus provide a good model of how global and regional intergovernmental organizations could closely cooperate for world peace and development.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the AALCC. Since 1983 when it became a full member, China has actively participated in the AALCC's work and vigorously supported it. China is ready to further strengthen the role and impact of the AALCC and make a contribution to the close cooperation between it and the United Nations.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his report on the "Cooperation between the United Nations and

the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee," as contained in document A/55/221.

I also would like to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Wafik Zaher Kamil, the new Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), for his election to this high office. We are confident that under his stewardship the AALCC will grow further. I also wish to express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Tang Chengyuan, the former Secretary-General of the AALCC for his outstanding service.

The AALCC is a unique organization embodying a large number of Asian and African States that are willing to actively participate in making the law that governs relations among nations and to positively contribute to the promotion of the rule of law in international relations. Since its foundation, the Consultative Committee has undertaken various studies on international legal subjects of common concern to the two continents. It has also facilitated the exchange of views and information among its members States on developments relating to international legal matters and has played a significant role in harmonizing the positions of Asian and African countries on major legal issues.

It needs to be underscored that the Consultative Committee has undertaken a systematic and consistent study of items that are on the agendas of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly and the International Law Commission, from Asian and African perspectives. Commentaries and recommendations of this organization have been, directly or indirectly, reflected in the proceedings of the United Nations legal organs and have assisted its member States to actively participate in international legal conferences.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC on international legal matters began immediately after the coming into existence of the Consultative Committee in 1956 and became institutional in 1980 when observer status was accorded to the AALCC by the United Nations General Assembly. The cooperation that continues to exist today has proved to be fruitful and has served the mutual interests of the two organizations. This collaboration has been developed further in recent years and is being carried out in several forms and

covers various subjects of high importance to the international community as a whole.

I need not dwell on various aspects of this flourishing relationship since the report before the Assembly illustrates in detail the valuable cooperation developed between the two organizations. The areas of cooperation apart from the field of international law now include subjects relating to economic, environmental and humanitarian law and peaceful settlement of disputes. I should like to highlight only a few examples of this constructive cooperation:

During the period under consideration, the Consultative Committee organized several seminars and workshops to promote adherence by its member States to a number of instruments that have been developed under the auspices of different bodies of the United Nations. It has also provided technical assistance to its members who wanted to become parties to these instruments. Beyond any doubt, the promotion and the dissemination of the international instruments at the regional level is an essential factor for better understanding of these documents, which in turn would facilitate their universal acceptance.

The wide range of topics on the agenda of the Consultative Committee is indicative of the resolve of the Committee to positively contribute to the new challenges of the international communities arising out of globalization. The Consultative Committee closely monitors the legal developments relating to international economic cooperation for development. The three seminars organized by the Committee in the past two years are examples of activities carried out by the Committee to meet the challenges of the new era.

Last but not the least, regional arbitration centres that have been established in Cairo, Kuala Lumpur, Tehran and Lagos, under the scheme established by the AALCC, represent a noteworthy step taken by the Committee to promote the settlement of commercial disputes at the regional level. This scheme aims at assisting the administration of national and international arbitration cases based on the rules that have been developed by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

To conclude, we feel that prospects for future cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee are promising. This is why the Islamic Republic of Iran has co-sponsored the draft resolution on the cooperation

between the two organizations, as contained in document A/55/L.12, and hopes that this resolution would be unanimously approved by this Assembly.

Mr. Anwar (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee," contained in document A/55/221.

More than four decades ago, the Asian and African nations established the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), an outcome of the historic Bandung Conference, to serve as an advisory body to its member States in the field of international law and as a forum for Asian-African cooperation in legal matters of common concern. Since its inception, its endeavours have surpassed our expectations. Apart from undertaking a number of significant studies in international law, it has served member States effectively by providing a forum for the exchange of views and for harmonizing the views and positions of the Asian and African countries on various aspects in the codification and development of international law. All this bodes well for the establishment of a world order based on justice and equity for all nations.

One of the main objectives of the AALCC is to enhance the progressive development of international law while forging close links between itself and the United Nations. This common goal was attained in 1980 when the AALCC was accorded Permanent Observer status, laying the foundations for a flourishing cooperation between the two bodies. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that the Consultative Committee has accorded close attention to the items on the agenda of the Sixth Committee from the perspective of developing countries.

This cooperative framework has achieved considerable success. Close consultation in matters concerning international law has now expanded to the fields of economic, environmental and humanitarian law as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes. During the past two years, the AALCC has participated in a number of important meetings and conferences which have included, among others, sessions of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court, the observation of the centennial of the first International Peace Conference at The Hague, the

United Nations Environment Programme and the International Law Commission. Also, it is most relevant that another item has been placed on its agenda concerning the extraterritorial application of national legislation and sanctions imposed against third parties.

Since the preparation of a study on strengthening the role of the United Nations through the rationalization of its functional modalities with special reference to the General Assembly, in 1985, the AALCC has undertaken a number of initiatives to strengthen the role of the United Nations by promoting its activities among its member States. Similarly, there can be no doubt of its tireless efforts in contributing to the success of the United Nations Decade of International Law.

It is also important to focus attention on the Consultative Committee's endeavours to render assistance to its member States with a view to facilitating their active participation in the meetings of the Sixth Committee. In this regard, it is pertinent to note AALCC's work on the topic of the jurisdictional immunities of States and their properties at its thirty-ninth session. Furthermore, the assistance of the AALCC in ascertaining the feasibility of compiling the national legislation, jurisprudence and practices of member States is a worthy endeavour.

Over the years, my delegation has acknowledged with appreciation the AALCC's close monitoring of the work and functioning of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Seabed Authority, as well as other related organs. As alluded to in the report of the Secretary-General, with the growing number of maritime delimitation cases being brought before the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the study of the law of the sea should be a priority for the AALCC member States.

As a developing country, Indonesia appreciates the work of the AALCC on economic cooperation for development. My delegation is therefore gratified that the AALCC organized, with financial and technical assistance, a one-day special meeting on "Electronic Commerce: Legal Issues and its Impact on Developing Countries". In my delegation's view this is an item of particular importance in an electronic age of e-commerce, intellectual property and complex issues relating to contractual obligations.

Finally, my delegation deems it a distinct pleasure to join in sponsoring the draft resolution on the item before us and hopes that it will receive the unanimous support of Member States.

The President: In accordance with resolution 35/2 of 13 October 1980, I now call on the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Mr. Wafik Kamil.

Mr. Kamil (Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee): It is an honour for me to address this meeting of the General Assembly. May I at the outset thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee. I also wish to thank all the delegations who have spoken on the item and who have elaborated on the many topics in which cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC exists.

Destiny has allowed me today, for the first time in my diplomatic career and on the eve of the dawn of the new Millennium, to address the representatives of our planet from the podium of the highest-level Assembly. Allow me to pay homage to the United Nations for its 55 years of immense efforts for the sake of international peace and security, as well as to all the Secretaries-General of the Organization and to all previous Presidents of the General Assembly who guided the international community towards peace, stability, development, peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and basic freedoms and who have tried, by all possible means, to relieve the suffering from hunger, desertification, natural disasters, epidemics and so on of people in all corners of our planet. We also applaud all those who spared no effort, goodwill or vigilance in combating the "human plagues" who perpetrated horrors against their own brothers and sisters.

When we look back at the events of the last century, both pride and shame engulf our thoughts. Tremendous advances were made in the fields of industry, technology, science and medicine. However, there were two world wars and numerous conflicts, killing millions of people. The use of the most destructive weapons of mass destruction — nuclear weapons — causes humanity to shudder even today.

Just a few weeks ago, on the historic occasion of the Millennium Summit, more than 150 heads of State and Government assembled in this very Hall and spoke

from this rostrum. The voices were many, but there was a common message, and that was unity among diversity — unity for the common goal of international peace, security and nuclear disarmament, protection of human rights and freedom, removal of poverty, disease and so on.

The Declaration adopted by the Millennium Assembly reaffirmed faith in the United Nations and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. It recognized that while globalization offers great opportunities, benefits at present are unevenly shared and costs unevenly distributed. This imbalance should be corrected to provide the cornerstone of a just world and of the success of efforts for globalization. The Assembly also resolved to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international affairs and to make the United Nations more effective in maintaining international peace and security. We sincerely hope that the dawn of the new millennium will bring a new awakening and a determination to make the world a safer and saner place for present and future generations.

In order to achieve this objective, the United Nations will and should play the central role. Humanity should spare no effort to keep our United Nations, the heart of our planet, alive, productive and effective. It is heartening to note that in this context the Assembly stressed the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

As a representative of a regional organization who assumed the duties of Secretary-General in May 2000, I would like to assure the Assembly that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) will not fail in its duty. It is committed to the ideals of the United Nations and is ready to share responsibility in promoting the effective implementation of various international conventions in areas such as arms control, disarmament, humanitarian law and human rights, terrorism, drug trafficking, environment and other relevant areas.

In recognition of its role, the accordance of permanent observer status to the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1980 was a turning point in the history of the AALCC. It soon oriented its activities to suit the needs and aspirations of its member States.

When I prepared my statement on this item, I studied, as the new Secretary-General of the AALCC,

the programme of cooperation in force between the world Organization and the AALCC, which was agreed pursuant to General Assembly resolution 36/38 of 18 November 1981. This programme, besides establishing a cooperative framework for mutual consultation and representation, identified areas for focused attention between the two organizations, such as the law of the sea, refugees, strengthening the role of the United Nations, illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and international economic cooperation for development. Over the years great efforts have been made by the AALCC to implement programmes in these areas. Time does not permit me to elaborate in detail. The Secretary-General's report and all my colleagues' interventions have covered most of the areas of cooperation. I would only like to point out that the study prepared by the AALCC on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the AALCC's study promoting the role of the International Court of Justice and the establishment of the AALCC's regional arbitration centres were just a few areas where the AALCC has made useful contributions to supplement the work of the United Nations.

Concerning the existing cooperation between the United Nations and our Committee, I wish to state that the AALCC, since its establishment in 1956, has been a major forum for cooperation among the States of the Asian-African regions on international law matters. Among the numerous subjects considered by the Committee, the law of the sea had and still has a distinctive place. Concepts such as the exclusive economic zone and archipelagic States had their origin in AALCC deliberations. On many other subjects, such as refugee law, human rights, the International Criminal Court, the environment, trade law matters and the United Nations Decade of International Law, the Committee made equally useful contributions.

The preparation of extensive studies to assist its member States in participating in international legal conferences convoked under the auspices of the United Nations and on selected items on the agenda of the annual session of the General Assembly became the regular activities of the AALCC secretariat. In addition, the holding of an annual meeting of legal advisers of AALCC member States in New York and the consideration by the General Assembly of the item on cooperation between the AALCC and the United Nations provided other opportunities to coordinate its activities with the United Nations. Since I have

assumed the duties of Secretary-General, it has been my endeavour to strengthen existing cooperation and find new areas in which the AALCC could supplement the work of the United Nations.

It has been the constant endeavour of the AALCC to promote wider acceptance of United Nations Conventions. It will continue its focus on the core group of 25 multilateral treaties which reflect the key policy goals of the United Nations and the spirit of the Charter, in respect of which the United Nations Secretary-General has made an appeal. It may not be out of place to mention here that apart from the United Nations, the AALCC has concluded cooperation agreements with several United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, such as the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Council of Europe. The thrust of these agreements is to organize joint programmes and meetings on topics of current relevance. Invariably, the focus has been on the promotion of wider acceptance of international conventions, especially those concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and its agencies.

I would like to touch briefly upon some of the pressing issues that need urgent attention and are included in our programme of cooperation. A problem that has assumed new dimensions and has aroused greater concern is international terrorism. Illicit drug trafficking, small-arms smuggling and nuclear terrorism are also complex issues that need urgent attention. The recently concluded Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which I hope will be adopted by the General Assembly this year, together with other international conventions dealing with specific aspects of terrorism, provide useful a legal framework. However, the need for a comprehensive and concerted approach can hardly be overemphasized.

In recent years a great deal of attention has been focused on human rights issues. The implementation of international conventions on these matters has stirred some controversy. The basic concern of developing countries is the recognition of their right to development. Their priorities are the eradication of poverty, creating better health conditions and promoting education and more employment opportunities for millions of their citizens. These perspectives should not be overlooked in determining the norms and legal niceties involved in the implementation of those conventions.

Among the recent initiatives aimed at enhancing the AALCC's role, the Committee has embarked upon new programme areas. In order to highlight the importance of issues related to globalization, it has focused its attention on the work of the World Trade Organization. The legal issues emanating from information technology are being taken up in close cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization. With regard to refugee matters, the AALCC's 1966 Bangkok Principles on the Status and Treatment of Refugees have been revised in consultation and cooperation with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). More recently, two weeks ago an agreement was concluded with the International Organization for Migration to give in-depth consideration to migration issues. Closer cooperation with human rights organizations is being established to initiate joint programmes. With a view to strengthening the legal regime of non-proliferation and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Asian and African region, the organization of a training course in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency is being considered.

Such high-sounding words as human dignity, equality and equity do not mean much for millions of hungry and poor people in many parts of the world. The problem of refugees and displaced persons continues to haunt humanity. The protection of civilians in armed conflict and the scourge of leftover landmines in many parts of the world, along with the huge costs of destroying them, are two other issues of great concern.

A closely related aspect that has crippled the economies and growth of many developing countries — especially on the African continent — is the debt burden. I appeal to developed countries from this, the highest forum of mankind, to take a pragmatic view of this problem and find a solution to it. Without a solution, and if developing countries are not relieved of this heavy burden, those countries will have great difficulty in finding their way to development and new technologies to combat hunger, epidemics and similar problems.

In connection with all these problems, I would like to recall the "Declaration on the Enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Arrangements or Agencies in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security", which was adopted

by the General Assembly on 9 December 1994. That Declaration emphasized that regional organizations can usefully complement the work of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, especially in providing confidence-building measures in their specific regions. The AALCC would be pleased to continue and to strengthen its cooperation with regard to all the topics I have mentioned in order to attain international peace and security, strengthen international cooperation and enhance the rule of law.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce an oral revision to the draft resolution he introduced earlier in this meeting.

Mr. Gomaa (Egypt): I am taking the floor on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.12 in order to introduce a correction to it before the General Assembly acts on it.

As the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee is a biennial one, it should be included on the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Therefore, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to paragraph 7, the last paragraph of the draft resolution. The reference in that paragraph to the fifty-sixth session, should in fact read "the fifty-seventh session".

The President: Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/55/L.12, Japan and Sri Lanka have become co-sponsors.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.12, as orally revised.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.12, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/55/L.12, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 55/4).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 22?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences (A/55/312/Add.1)

The President: As members are aware, the Assembly, in section I, paragraph 7 of its resolution 40/243, decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

As indicated in document A/55/312/Add.1, the Committee on Conferences has recommended that the Assembly authorize the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group to meet in New York during the main part of the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly adopts this recommendation of the Committee on Conferences?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 174

The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order

Draft resolution (A/55/L.15)

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): It is my honour to initiate this morning, upon the instructions of my Government, a discussion of agenda item 174, relating to the role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order. As delegations will have gathered from our past statements on this theme, as well as from the information material which we have recently circulated, the concept of such an order was the brainchild of the late Mr. Cheddi Jagan, President of Guyana, who was inspired by a vision of the enormous potential for human development created by the end of the cold war, the accelerated rate of technological development and the developing interdependence of nations. President Jagan believed that it was now opportune for the nations of the world to begin to build a new and enlightened partnership based on mutual respect, democratic governance and popular participation, and embodying — like any other partnership — the rights and obligations of the parties. I may add that this concept has already been endorsed by the heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, by the Commonwealth heads of

Government, by the Rio Group, by the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held at Durban, South Africa, and by the Group of 77 summit held at Havana, Cuba.

And now, committed to the promotion of the late President's vision by the Government, my Government has decided now to bring this proposal to the United Nations so that it might enter the wider consciousness of the international community. In so doing, we have been prompted by the realization that over the past two decades there has been a gradual but definite displacement of development from the international policy agenda. That displacement has occurred primarily in the context of two important and interrelated developments, namely the ideological and political ascendancy of economic neo-liberalism, with its emphasis on the role of the market, and the accelerated pace of globalization, which has itself been increasingly underpinned by a market-liberalizing logic. We are of the view that the time has come for the international community to create an alternative vision for development based on a more balanced relationship between the market and the State.

It may be useful for me first to say a few words on the context and rationale of the proposal for this new order. Why are we taking such an initiative when there may already be others with a similar thrust? And indeed, there has been no dearth of plans to pursue development. Ever since its foundation in 1945, the United Nations has been labouring, decade after decade, to devise an international strategy for development. And, decade after decade, these painfully negotiated agreements have proved resistant to implementation. We may also recall that, at the sixth special session of the General Assembly, we actually managed to forge a Declaration and a Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. And again in 1990, we succeeded in elaborating, after seemingly endless negotiations, the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries.

It is fair to say that those documents fully captured, at least in their language, the aspirations of the developing countries to economic and social progress. Yet, as we know, they have all proved disappointing in their results. Development continues to be a defiant will-o'-the-wisp, forever dancing before our eyes but always elusive.

Undaunted by these failures, we have pursued other initiatives in the hope of better outcomes. Over the decade of the 1990s we entered into a round of global summit conferences on most of the major issues of concern to the international community: children, environment and development, human rights, the sustainable development of small States, population and development, social development, women, human settlements — and the list goes on. We also managed to put together, through sheer perseverance, a comprehensive and cogent Agenda for Development to match the Agenda for Peace. Regrettably, these many efforts failed to yield the desired results, leaving us to wonder whether the game was worth the candle or whether we are engaged in a mere charade. The peoples of the developing countries, I believe, are too tired and too poor to be forever playing games. And yet we are about to embark upon the elaboration of another development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium.

We may very well wonder what can be achieved since the reviews of the outcomes of some of the major conferences which have been held thus far do not augur well for the future. As we ponder the reasons for our shortcomings, we invariably have to lament the chronic lack of the two elements that are required for progress, namely political will and financial resources. We then become caught up in a spiral of mutual reproach and recrimination. No one bothers to pursue the crucial questions: How do we develop the necessary political will, and how can we mobilize the needed resources?

Yet it is not only those shortcomings that raise questions about the international negotiating process. It is also the realization that the new North-South/East-West so-called consensus that has emerged in respect of development and governance, the roles of the State and of the market and sustainable environmentalism has created the need for a new universal human order, because it has generated new social, economic and political problems, perhaps of an unintended character, complexity and magnitude. These are fomented by the contradictions inherent in the consensus itself, and they clearly suggest the need for a fresh examination of the premises on which it is based.

There can therefore be no gainsaying the fact that before we can ever hope to have a breakthrough in development, these core questions of political will and resources must be resolved. The dialectic which currently divides Member States in both the philosophy

and the practice of development can hardly be expected to encourage a common approach to the very difficult challenge that is the development agenda. An urgent reconciliation of the widely divergent views of the partners on world economic and social issues is a prerequisite for success in any future negotiations.

The first step in this process of reconciliation is clearly the resolution of the many dramatic contradictions that have emerged in modern economic thinking. In the socio-economic sphere for example, the ascendancy of economic liberalism has undoubtedly accentuated inequality at all levels: within countries, both developed and developing, as well as among countries — North and South, East and West. Individualism and materialism continue to be extolled at the expense of social and human values. And while the international community says it is committed to the reduction of poverty, national and international policies do not as yet reflect that commitment.

In absolute terms, the population living in poverty in both the South and the North is increasing. Economic growth and unprecedented technological progress and efficiency have been, ironically, the harbingers of greater unemployment and declining human welfare. Attempts at preserving the physical environment increasingly vitiate efforts to sustain human development.

The rhetoric of poverty reduction has all but supplanted any real commitment to the higher ideal of humanism. The much-touted "equality of opportunity" is proving to be no more than a mask for economic Darwinism. Moreover, the freedoms expected from healthy competition under private enterprise are being rapidly restrained by the controlling hand of powerful conglomerates.

In the political arena, we cannot help but note that the ascendancy of democracy often means not greater popular participation and consensus but the rule of the powerful and its manipulation of the majority. Democracy is increasingly becoming a cloak for government by oligarchy, often going hand in hand with the rise of racism and ethnic conflicts, fascist movements, minority disaffirmation, regional fragmentation and strident nationalism. Though often practised at the national level, the virtues of democracy are still conspicuously absent in the wider community of nations, creating isolationism among the rich rather than solidarity among humankind.

Naturally, the proponents of globalization and trade liberalization will argue differently. They are, of course, convinced that the free market will remedy the imbalance in economic growth between countries and that as it swells, all boats will rise with the tide. Where does the truth lie? Let us look at the empirical evidence.

Yet another contradiction that bedevils international cooperation is that which persists between the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development. With the rapid proliferation of conflict in various parts of the world and the resulting increase in peacekeeping operations, there is a growing preoccupation among developing countries that with the astronomical costs of implementing the Agenda for Peace, the Agenda for Development will be further starved of resources. Clearly, a sensible balance has to be struck between these two basic purposes of this Organization. After all, as Pope John Paul II has said, "Peace is but another name for development". New approaches must therefore be developed to strengthen the indissoluble link between development and peace, so that they are made mutually reinforcing through a greater investment in preventive, rather than enforcement, action.

As we can see, therefore, not only is there a wide disparity in the economic and social conditions of the developed and developing countries, but there is also an equally serious and more frightening difference in their perspectives on development policy. While we may use the same words to refer to these challenges, it appears that often we do not mean the same things. Globalization to many is the prescribed panacea for all economic ills, while others see it as a threat of further marginalization from the global economy.

Another buzzword which evokes different meanings depending on who uses it is governance. Coming from the North, governance smacks of conditionality to the South, which sees it more as good government through capacity-building. Similarly divisive are the fashionable labels of human rights, human security and humanitarian intervention, which, though seemingly clear at first blush, develop sinister connotations as the exchange proceeds. The list goes on. Even the words "human order", which we have used to describe this initiative, have been known in the past to be highly inflammatory. The mere mention of these words was sufficient to produce a severe allergic reaction in some audiences, leading them to react

violently against such concepts as the new international economic order and the new international information order.

Happily, it now appears that at the start of the twenty-first century and this new millennium, there is a greater tolerance for the word and concept of order. Witness the many statements heard at both the Millennium Summit and in the Millennium Assembly debate, in which one often heard reference to the need for a more enlightened global dispensation in this world. More surprisingly, the calls for such an order came not only from developing countries but also from developed ones. All delegations will have seen, I hope, the article in the *International Herald Tribune* of 7 September 2000 entitled "Progressive Equation: Globalization and Welfare", which featured a letter signed by the leaders of four important European States: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. In that public pronouncement, those heads of Government stated, *inter alia*:

"We believe that there is an emerging consensus on the right framework to build a global order based on equal worth and social fairness ... We are committed to a new international social compact. We recognize that in an increasingly interdependent world the aims of wider prosperity and a strengthening of civil society cannot be pursued within the nation-state alone".

They went on to state that

"the key to development is to establish a virtuous circle" — and here I underline the word "virtuous" — "between laudable aims that too often are pursued in isolation — debt relief, conflict prevention, trade, educational and health investment, environmental enhancement".

These sentiments are certainly not dissimilar from those embodied in our own proposal. Why then can we not come together in this "Tower of Babel" that the United Nations is to agree on a common understanding and a common agenda for the United Nations? Why does the great political will which is often spoken of in the Assembly and elsewhere not descend into the first basement? Perhaps we should meet here a little more often.

The second most frequently asked question is, "What is this new global human order? What is it all about?" Having been in this house longer than most, I

know that any new initiative, no matter how well intentioned, is suspect. Suspicion is, in fact, the single most important impediment to agreement among nations. Yet it is a fair question which deserves an answer. In attempting to provide one, I should perhaps first say what the proposal is not.

Contrary to what some may fear, it is not a call for another United Nations talkfest. As we are all painfully aware, there are enough of these. It is instead a serious and honest attempt to find common ground on which future international cooperation can be premised and to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to development instead of the present *ad hoc* and scattershot manner in which we proceed. Furthermore, it is not intended to conflict with other initiatives and proposals already in existence and currently being pursued. Rather, it should be considered as a complementary device for facilitating consensus. Conceivably, it could also serve as a safety valve if or when, for whatever reason, the established negotiating processes flounder or fail.

A quick reading of the documentation that was circulated will, I hope, make it clear that the new global human order is not merely a philosophical concept, but a practical agenda for development. One of its most interesting aspects is the proposal for a modern and enhanced version of the Marshall Plan to assist developing countries to reach the threshold of self-reliant economic development and be able to enter the global economy. In this regard, it is interesting to note the sense of morality which appears to have motivated the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War.

If we revisit the speech which the then Secretary of State Marshall made at Harvard University in June 1947, we cannot fail to be impressed by his declared altruism. He said:

"Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty ... and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. Such assistance, I am convinced, must not be on a piecemeal basis as various crises develop."

Would that today, when the world economy is again adrift with uncertainty, such progressive thinking could

re-emerge, resulting in the equally bold measures that are needed to put it on the right course.

I may add that the proposals mentioned in the documents are not exhaustive, but merely indicative. Several others have evolved from the wider discussions which have taken place since the concept of the new global human order was first introduced. Obviously, although by no means novel, many of these ideas can be implemented only if they command general consensus. We are therefore not propounding them for consideration at this stage. As I said at the outset, our main objective now is simply to initiate a dialogue aimed at securing a reconciliation of the many divergent views on development that prevent progress so that we might be able to develop a shared vision and strategy for the future.

That brings me to the third question that may legitimately be asked: how do we do this? How do we find the political will to energize our efforts to create a new development paradigm for the twenty-first century? My delegation is currently in the process of negotiating a draft resolution that will outline a clear set of procedures designed to promote wide-ranging consultations among the various developing partners to explore the outer limits to which they are prepared to go in development cooperation. Hopefully, such a dialogue could establish the basic terms and conditions of the new partnership and at the same time provide a certain degree of predictability and reliability in our cooperation.

There can be no doubt that the best forum for undertaking such an enterprise is the United Nations. Accepted as the most representative of international institutions, the United Nations is ideally suited to promoting agreement among Member States. Moreover, the Secretariat is well equipped to provide the necessary intellectual support for the development of these initiatives. Member States, however, cannot delegate or escape responsibility for determining the

uses to which the Organization must be put or for deciding how it should be geared to perform these functions. Too often — for example, in the attempt to reform the Security Council — we make the mistake of trying to shape the institutions before agreeing upon what we wish them to do. The result, not surprisingly, is that very often we put the cart before the horse.

In conclusion, let me say that the lineaments of this new global human order already exist in the United Nations Charter. We need only to build on this structure to ensure that the Organization works in the manner intended. My delegation is not naive or foolish enough to believe that this proposed order can come into existence overnight. Its creation will require not only strong political commitment to the principles and purposes of multilateralism, but also dedication and patience in translating them into reality. We believe, however, like the Chinese people, that the longest journey begins with the first step. We are therefore content today to take merely the first step.

Programme of work

Before proceeding to the next item, I would like to announce some additions to the programme of work of the General Assembly. I would like to inform Members that on Thursday morning, 26 October 2000, the General Assembly will take up agenda item 16 (c), entitled "Election of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" as the second item. The General Assembly will also resume consideration of agenda item 31, entitled "Elimination of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion" as the fourth item for action, draft resolution A/55/L.9/Rev.1.

Next week, on Monday morning, 30 October 2000, the General Assembly will take up agenda item 183, entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" as the fifth item. The list of speakers for item 183 is now open.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.